

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 06866 271318Z

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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SUBJ: ISRAELI PRESS COMMENTARY ON WALDHEIM VISIT AND RENEWAL
OF UNDOF MANDATE

SUMMARY: ALL ISRAELI NEWSPAPERS GIVE FRONTPAGE COVERAGE
TO WALDHEIM VISIT TO ISRAEL AND UNCONDITIONAL SYRIAN AGREE-
MENT TO RENEW UNDOF MANDATE. COMMENTARY ALSO FOCUSES
ON REPORTED US AND EGYPTIAN ROLES IN ACHIEVING SYRIAN AGREEMENT,
AND ON IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER US MEDIATION IN MIDDLE EAST.
END SUMMARY.

1. MAIN STORY IN ISRAELI PRESS NOVEMBER 27 IS OVERNIGHT VISIT
OF UNSYG WALDHEIM TO ISRAEL IN COURSE OF RAPID MIDEAST TRIP,
AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SYRIAN UNCONDITIONAL AGREEMENT TO RENEWAL
OF UNDOF MANDATE ON GOLAN HEIGHTS FOR AN ADDITIONAL SIX MONTH
PERIOD. GOI REPORTEDLY ALSO GAVE UNSYG OFFICIAL GOI AGREEMENT
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 06866 271318Z

TO EXTENSION. PRESS ALSO HIGHLIGHTS COMMENT BY MEMBER OF

WALDHEIM PARTY THAT SYRIA EXPECTED THAT ITS AGREEMENT WOULD FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTION 338 WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF EARLY REOPENING OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. IMPLICATION, SOURCE NOTED, WAS THAT SYRIA WOULD NOT AGREE TO FURTHER EXTENSION OF UNDOF MANDATE UNLESS CONCRETE MOVES WERE TAKEN IN DIRECTION OF POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE.

2. IN ADDITION TO FACTUAL REPORTING, MORNING NEWSPAPERS ALSO COMMENT AND SPECULATE ON BEHIND-THE SCENES NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO UNDOF MANDATE EXTENSION, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MAINTAINING MOMENTUM OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS IN MONTHS AHEAD.

3. HATZOFEH WRITES, "POLITICAL CIRCLES IN JERUSALEM NOTED THAT THE EXTENSION OF THE MANDATE CAME AS A RESULT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S EFFORTS IN CONTACTS HE HAD WITH PRESIDENT ASAD. AT THIS STAGE IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE SYRIAN DECISION WAS INFLUENCED BY RUSSIAN PRESSURE FOLLOWING THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE. (ISRAELI SOURCES) THINK THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE GIVEN UP AFTER THEY REALIZED THAT IN CASE OF WAR IT WAS VERY PROBABLE THAT EGYPT WOULD NOT COME TO THEIR AID. THE EGYPTIANS HAVE HINTED THIS TO SYRIA AND EXPLAINED THAT SYRIA SHOULD FOLLOW EGYPT'S FOOTSTEPS AND EXTEND THE MANDATE."

4. DAVAR (ESHED) WRITES, "IT IS NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT THE SYRIAN DECISION TO EXTEND THE SEPARATION AGREEMENT WAS TAKEN AFTER SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD PROMISED THE SYRIANS, DURING HIS VISIT IN DAMASCUS, NOT TO NEGLECT THEM (AND ADDED) THAT IN THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS ISRAEL WILL AGREE TO ANOTHER WITHDRAWAL IN THE SINAI AND AFTERWARDS AN ADDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL ON THE GOLAN. HOWEVER THIS ASSUMPTION RECEIVED NO CONFIRMATION FROM ISRAELI OR UN SOURCES."

5. DAVAR EDITORIAL NOTES THAT:"THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SYRIAN AGREEMENT IS THAT DR KISSINGER WILL BE GIVEN ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE HIS MEDIATION; AND INDEED IT WAS REPORTED THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER WILL TRY THAT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE MEANING OF THE SYRIAN AGREEMENT IS THAT DAMASCUS GAVE EGYPT TIME FOR CONTACTS REGARDING THE SINAI, CONTACTS WHICH WOULD HAVE NEVER TAKEN PLACE IF CAIRO WOULD HAVE BEEN DRAGGED IN MILITARY ACTIVITY BEFOREHAND. WE WELCOME THE FACT THAT

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 06866 271318Z

OPENINGS FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE WITHOUT MILITARY FLAREUPS REMAIN, AND UNDOUBTEDLY WE HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY EVEN THOUGH THESE OPENINGS HAVE BECOME NARROW CRACKS FOLLOWING THE RABAT RESOLUTIONS AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE PLO BY THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY."

6. AL HAMISHMAR WRITES, "ACCORDING TO POLITICAL OBSERVERS THERE IS NO INCLINATION IN JERUSALEM TO DISCUSS WITH WALDHEIM

POLITICAL SUBJECTS BEYOND THE EXTENSION OF THE UN EMERGENCY
FORCE MANDATE ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS. IT SEEMS THAT
PARTICULARLY NOW, FOLLOWING THE RECENT RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY
THE UN AND UNESCO, JERUSALEM HAS NO INTEREST TO GIVE
THE UNSYG ANY KIND OF LEGITIMIZATION WHICH WOULD ENABLE HIM
TO REGARD HIMSELF AS POTENTIAL DESIGNATE TO FULFILL A REAL ROLE
IN THE FUTURE IN CONTACTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES."
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